

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A ~~slider bearing surface~~ comprising:
  - a leading edge;
  - a trailing edge;
  - a bearing surface level; and
  - ~~a first recessed level recessed below the bearing surface level;~~
  - ~~a second recessed level recessed below the first recessed level; and~~
  - a center split feature disposed proximate a centroid of the ~~slider bearing surface~~, the center split feature comprising:
    - a first center split ~~surface level~~ that is substantially level with ~~at the same level as the bearing surface level;~~
    - a second center split ~~surface level~~ disposed forward of the first center split ~~surface level~~ that is at the same level as the first recessed ~~from the bearing surface level;~~ and
    - a third center split ~~surface level~~ disposed forward of the second center split ~~surface level~~ and recessed from the second center split ~~surface level~~;
  - wherein the first, second and third center split ~~surfaces levels~~ form a step like pattern, and are disposed such that fluid flowing over the bearing surface flows over the third, second and first center split ~~surfaces levels~~ respectively.
2. (Currently Amended) The ~~slider bearing surface~~ of claim 1 further comprising:
  - a cavity dam disposed proximate to the leading edge, the cavity dam having a media facing surface that is raised above the first recessed ~~surface level~~; and
  - a subambient pressurization cavity disposed between the cavity dam and the center split feature.

3. (Currently Amended) The ~~sliderbearing surface~~ of claim 2 further comprising:
  - a first side rail disposed along a first side of the slider ~~body~~;
  - a second side rail disposed along a second side of the slider ~~body~~.
4. (Currently Amended) The ~~sliderbearing surface~~ of claim 3 wherein the first and second rails are continuous with the center split feature.
5. (Withdrawn and Amended) The ~~sliderbearing surface~~ of claim 2 wherein the first center split ~~surfacelevel~~ is connected to the cavity dam and the first center ~~surfacesplit level~~ surrounds the subambient pressurization cavity.
6. (Currently Amended) The ~~sliderbearing surface~~ of claim 2 wherein a portion of the subambient pressurization cavity includes the third center split ~~surfacelevel~~.
7. (Currently Amended) The ~~sliderbearing surface~~ of claim 1 wherein the first recessed ~~surfacelevel~~ is recessed between about .15 microns and about .3 microns.
8. (Currently Amended) The ~~sliderair bearing surface~~ of claim 1 wherein the second recessed ~~surfacelevel~~ is recessed between about 2 microns and about 5 microns.
9. (Currently Amended) The ~~sliderbearing surface~~ of claim 2 wherein the center split feature further includes:
  - a pair of arms extending from the center split feature towards the cavity dam, each arm coupled to a side edge of the center split feature;
  - wherein the pair of arms define side edges of the subambient pressurization cavity.
10. (Currently Amended) The ~~sliderbearing surface~~ of claim 9 wherein the pair of arms connect the center split feature with the cavity dam.

11. (Currently Amended) The ~~slider~~~~bearing surface~~ of claim 10 wherein a top surface of the pair of arms is substantially level with at the second center split surface~~first recessed level~~.

12. (Currently Amended) The ~~slider~~~~bearing surface~~ of claim 10 wherein a top surface of the pair of arms is at the bearing surface ~~level~~.

13. (Withdrawn and Amended) The ~~slider~~~~bearing surface~~ of claim 9 further comprising:  
a plurality of arms extending from the first center split ~~feature~~~~level~~ towards the cavity  
dam, the plurality of arms spaced apart from each other and arranged about the  
centroid; and  
wherein the plurality of arms divide the second center split ~~surface~~~~level~~ into a plurality of  
discrete areas.

14. (Withdrawn and Amended) The ~~slider~~~~bearing surface~~ of claim 13 wherein the plurality of arms divide the third center split ~~surface~~~~level~~ into a plurality of discrete areas.

15. (Currently Amended) A slider supporting a transducer comprising:  
a slider body having a media opposing face with a leading edge and a trailing edge  
relative to a direction of rotation of a media surface;  
a bearing surface disposed on the media opposing face, comprising:  
a center split feature disposed proximate a centroid of the slider  
body, the center split feature comprising:  
a first center split ~~surface~~~~level~~;  
a second center split ~~surface~~~~level~~ recessed from the first center split  
~~surface~~~~level~~;  
and  
a third center split ~~surface~~~~level~~ recessed from the second center

split surface level;

wherein the first, second and third center split levels form a step like pattern, and are disposed such that fluid flowing over the center split feature flows over the third, second and first center split surface levels respectively.

16. (Original) The slider of claim 15 wherein the slider body further comprises:
  - a cavity dam proximate to the leading edge;
  - a first side rail disposed along a first side of the slider body;
  - a second side rail disposed along a second side of the slider body; and
  - a subambient pressurization cavity disposed between the cavity dam and the center split feature.
17. (Original) The slider of claim 16 wherein the slider body further comprises:
  - a second sub ambient pressurization cavity, the second subambient pressurization cavity following, in the direction of fluid flow, the center split feature.
18. (Original) The slider of claim 17 wherein the second sub ambient pressurization cavity is divided into two separate cavities by a center rail feature.
19. (Currently Amended) A bearing surface of a slider comprising:
  - a center split feature disposed proximate a centroid of the slider bearing surface,
  - the center split feature comprising at least three center split levels;
  - a cavity dam disposed forward of the center split feature relative to a fluid flow;
  - and
  - wherein the at least three center split levels form a step like pattern, and are disposed such that the fluid flowing over the bearing surface flows over each of the at least three center split levels respectively.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (New) The bearing surface of claim 19 wherein the center split feature further includes:

a pair of arms extending from the center split feature towards the cavity dam, each arm  
coupled to a side edge of the center split feature;  
wherein the pair of arms define side edges of a subambient pressurization cavity.